

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THESSA 00681 280516Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L THESSALONIKI 681

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, GR

SUBJECT: CARAMANLIS CAUTIONS AND REASSURES GREEK MILITARY

REF: (1 THESSALONIKI 677 (2 THESSALONIKI 679

1. IN BRIEF PREPARED ADDRESS GIVEN AT CONCLUSION OF LUNCHEON IN HIS HONOR BY "C" CORPS COMMANDER LGEN AGAMEMNON GRATZIOS BEFORE 300 RANKING CIVILIAN AND MILITARY GUESTS (REF 1), INCLUDING MINDEF AVEROFF AND ARMED FORCES CHIEF ARBOUZIS, PM CARAMANLIS CALLED FOR UNITY WITHIN GREEK ARMED FORCES AND HEALING OF BREACH BETWEEN THEM AND NATION. SUMMARY FOLLOWS.

2. REFERRING TO UNITY OF GREEK NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ARMY THAT BROUGHT GREAT VICTORIES IN 1912-1913, CARAMANLIS RECALLED THIS FOLLOWED BY DIVISION RESULTING IN "CATASTROPHE OF ASIA MINOR" DECADE LATER. HISTORIC LESSON MUST BE BORNE IN MIND NOW, HE SAID, WHEN GREECE PASSING THROUGH CRITICAL PERIOD WHEREIN "HEAVY MISTAKES OF RECENT YEARS HAVE SHAKEN UNITY OF NATION", AND ADVENTURES WHOSE CONSEQUENCES "CANNOT YET BE ASSESSED". AGREEMENT WITHIN ARMED FORCES AND SPIRITUAL UNION BETWEEN THEM AND NATION MUST BE REESTABLISHED, BUT TO ACHIEVE THIS THERE MUST BE "DISTINCT PARTITION" BETWEEN ARMED FORCES AND "THOSE VERY FEW OFFICERS WHO DEPRIVED NATION OF ITS FREEDOM AND LED COUNTRY TO

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PAGE 02 THESSA 00681 280516Z

PAINFUL ADVENTURES".

3. PM SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO DWELL ON PAST AT THIS TIME IN ORDER AVOID HARMING PRESENT INTERESTS OF NATION, BUT ASSURED LISTENERS THAT THOSE "FEW WHO TOOK AND USED POWER ILLEGALLY" COMMITTED SERIOUS CRIMES AGAINST BOTH NATION AND ARMED FORCES, AND ARE "SO INCORRIGIBLE" THAT EVEN TODAY THEY ARE TRYING TO "ACHIEVE POSTPONEMENT OF COMING ELECTIONS". HE APPEALED THAT THESE "SELF-INVITED PROTECTORS OF NATION AND ARMED FORCES" WHO ARE ATTEMPTING TO SPREAD UNEASINESS AND CONCERN AMONG MILITARY BE IGNORED AND ISOLATED. HE PROMISED THAT IF HE WERE RETURNED TO OFFICE HE HAD NO INTENTION OF "CREATING TROUBLE WITHIN ARMED FORCES" AND THAT "FUTURE CONDUCT AND NOT THE PAST" WOULD BE CRITERION FOR OFFICERS' CAREERS.

4. PUNISHMENTS WOULD BE METED OUT TO GUILTY PARTIES "UNDER SHELTER OF JUSTICE AND ACCORDING TO LAWS", CARAMANLIS SAID, ADDING THAT HE FELT CERTAIN THIS WAS DESIRED BY MILITARY THEMSELVES TO REGAIN "THEIR PRESTIGE AND SPIRITUAL UNITY WITH NATION". HE PLEDGED TO MODERNIZE ARMED FORCES SO AS TO "MAKE THEM SHIELD AND PRIDE OF NATION", WHILE EXPECTING FROM ARMY OFFICERS "HIGH NATIONAL MORALE, GREAT FEELING OF DUTY, ABSTENTION FROM POLITICS AND ABSOLUTE DISCIPLINE".

5. COMMENT: SPEECH FOLLOWS ON REPORTS AND DENIALS OF UNREST AMONG GREEK OFFICERS, ESPECIALLY IN NORTH (REF 2). WE UNDERSTAND THAT PRIOR TO LUNCHEON PM ADDRESSED RANKING OFFICERS AT CLUB BEHIND CLOSED DOORS IN SAME VEIN. IT WAS OBSERVED THAT SOME OF THE FIELD GRADE OFFICERS SEATED NEAR TABLE OF HONOR REFRAINED FROM JOINING IN GENERAL ROUND OF APPLAUSE WHICH FOLLOWED PM'S REMARKS. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION OVER DRINK BEFORE LUNCHEON MINDEF AVERON-TOSITSA TOLD ME HE WOULD BE LEAVING THESSALONIKI EARLY FOLLOWING DAY (OCT 27) TO ADDRESS AND "ASSURE" OFFICERS IN "A" AND "B" CORPS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD ALREADY SPOKEN TO 7000 RPT 7000 OFFICERS IN RECENT DAYS AND REPORTED THEIR REACTION HAD BEEN "GOOD". HE ADDED OBSERVATION THAT MANY OFFICERS HAD NOT BEEN IN ACCORD WITH JUNTA BUT HAD CONTINUED IN SERVICE IN HONEST BELIEF THIS IN BEST INTERESTS OF NATION. IN SUM, IT SEEMS EVIDENT THERE IS CONCERN AND THAT GOVERNMENT KEEPING WARY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 THESSA 00681 280516Z

EYE ON ORIENTATION OF MILITARY OFFICERS.
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